

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of ordering a photo product to be printed at a selected location and delivered to a designee, comprising the steps of:

(a) a user communicating with a service provider that offers a plurality of photo products and selecting a particular photo product to incorporate a digital image provided by the user;

(b) the user providing an identification of the designee's location where the selected photo product is to be delivered;

(c) the service provider automatically selecting, from a plurality of printing locations, a particular printing location based on the identification of the designee's location;

(d) using a communications network to transfer the digital image from the user to the particular printing location; and

(e) printing the selected photo product at the particular printing location and delivering the photo product to the designee.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the user makes payment via the network for the photo product.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the identification of the designee's location is the designee's zip code.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the photo product is delivered to the designee by the U.S. postal service.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the service provider communicates a network address of the particular printing location to the user.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the user transfers the digital image to the network address communicated by the service provider.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the photo product includes at least one album page, the digital image is transferred from the user directly to the particular printing locations, and album page background image data is communicated from the service provider to the particular printing location in order to produce the at least one album page.

8. A method of ordering a photo product to be printed at a selected location and delivered to a designee, comprising the steps of:

- (a) a user communicating with a service provider that offers a plurality of photo products and selecting a particular photo product to incorporate a digital image provided by the user and sending the digital image to the service provider;
- (b) providing an identification of the designee's location where the selected photo product is to be delivered and the service provider selecting from a plurality of printing locations a particular printing location;
- (c) the service provider sending the digital image to the particular printing location; and
- (d) printing the selected photo product at the particular printing location and delivering the photo product to the designee.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the user makes payment via the network for the photo product.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the identification of the designee's location is the designee's postal code.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the postal code is a zip code.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein the service provider processes the digital image and sends the processed digital image to the particular printing location.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the processing includes combining the digital image with a background image provided by the service provider.

14. A method of ordering a photo product to be printed at a selected location and delivered to a designee, comprising the steps of:

(a) a user communicating with a service provider that offers a plurality of photo products and selecting a particular photo product to incorporate a plurality of digital images provided by the user;

(b) the service provider producing a representation of the photo product and sending such representation to the user;

(c) the user approving an order for the photo product depicted in said representation, and providing an identification of the designee's location where the selected photo product is to be delivered;

(d) the service provider using said identification of the designee's location to select, from a plurality of printing locations, a particular printing location;

(e) using a communications network to transfer the plurality of digital images to the particular printing location; and

(f) printing the selected photo product at the particular printing location and delivering the photo product to the designee.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the plurality of photo products is selected from a group including an album page containing two or more digital images provided by the user.

16. The method of claim 14 wherein the plurality of photo products includes prints having a plurality of different sizes.

17. The method of claim 14 further including the steps of a user providing a payment identifier specifying an account to be charged for producing and delivering the photo product.

18. A method of ordering a photo product to be printed at a selected location and delivered to a designee, comprising the steps of:

(a) a user communicating with a service provider that offers a plurality of photo products and selecting a particular photo product to incorporate a digital image provided by the user;

(b) the user providing an identification of the designee's location where the selected photo product is to be delivered;

(c) the service provider selecting, from a plurality of printing locations, a particular printing location based on the identification of designee's location;

(d) using a communications network to transfer the digital image from the user to the particular printing location at a suitable time; and

(e) printing the selected photo product at the particular printing location and delivering the photo product to the designee.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the suitable time is a time selected by the user.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein the suitable time is a time selected for efficient transfer over the channel.

21. The method of claim 18 wherein the suitable time is selected by a user from a plurality of service times provided by the provider.

22. A method of ordering a photo product to be printed at a selected location and delivered to a designee, comprising the steps of:

(a) a user communicating with a service provider and selecting a particular photo product to incorporate a digital image provided by the user;

(b) the user providing an identification of the designee's location where the selected photo product is to be delivered;

(c) the service provider automatically selecting, from a plurality of printing locations, a particular printing location based on the identification of the designee's location;

(d) using a communications network to transfer the digital image from the user to the particular printing location; and

(e) printing the selected photo product at the particular printing location

(f) printing a shipping label including the identification of the designees location

(g) attaching the shipping label to a shipping container for holding the photo product, and

(h) delivering the shipping container to the designee.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein step (f) includes printing a postage stamp on the shipping label.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the postage stamp depicts at least a portion of the digital image.

25. The method of claim 22 wherein the identification of the designee's location is the designee's zip code.

26. The method of claim 23 wherein the photo product is delivered to the designee by the U.S. postal service.

27. A method of ordering a hard copy product to be printed at a selected location and delivered to a designee, comprising the steps of:

(a) a user communicating with a service provider that offers a plurality of hard copy products and selecting a particular hard copy product to incorporate a digital document provided by the user;

(b) the user providing an identification of the designee's location where the selected hard copy product is to be delivered;

(c) the service provider automatically selecting, from a plurality of printing locations, a particular printing location based on the identification of the designee's location;

(d) using a communications network to transfer the digital document from the user to the particular printing location; and

(e) printing the selected hard copy product at the particular printing location and delivering the hard copy product to the designee.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the user makes payment via the network for the hard copy product.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the identification of the designee's location is the designee's zip code.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein the hard copy product is delivered to the designee by the U.S. postal service.